

Media Release

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“State misses golden opportunity to stimulate economy” – SACOME

State Budget omits funds for badly needed exports facility at Port Bonython

The South Australian mining industry has been left in limbo, with no deep sea port budgeted for in the State Budget, claims the industry’s peak body.

While the budget papers refer to “facilitating port and mining interests to secure development of Port Bonython”, in the current economic climate, such a strategy will not be successful without Government funding, according to the South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME).

“Although the mining industry has been very encouraged by the way the State Government has been working towards the development of a bulk commodities port, it is disappointing to not see a tangible commitment in the budget,” SACOME’s Chief Executive, Mr Jason Kuchel, said today.

“In the current economic climate, one way to really stimulate the economy is to accelerate progress on a deep sea port by providing some additional funds,” Mr Kuchel said.

“South Australia is sitting on rich mineral deposits, but a deep sea port is crucial for South Australia to get the products to overseas markets efficiently and economically.

“A deep sea port development will stimulate the SA economy, providing jobs right here and now – and for decades to come – as the State realises the economic opportunities a mining export facility can provide.

“This budget could have been a real boost for the regional economies of Whyalla, the Eyre Peninsula and the far north of our state, but it is a missed opportunity.

“A bulk commodities port development would also send the clearest signal yet, that South Australia is genuinely the best place in Australia to establish a mine,” Mr Kuchel said.

“Mining executives are telling us that if the State Government can’t get a bulk commodities port up in a timely manner, there is little hope for other more complex infrastructure requirements, leaving the industry with reduced confidence to plan new mines,” SACOME President, Mr John Roberts, said,

“While the State’s potential mineral wealth could deliver prosperity to South Australia, the opportunity goes begging for as long as the export solution is unresolved.

“Ultimately, the development of Port Bonython will be a huge boost for the South Australian economy,” Mr Roberts said.

Another concern of SACOME is the proposed staff cuts in the Department of Primary Industry and Resources SA (PIRSA).

“The State is turning to mining for its economic salvation, yet any job cuts to the Minerals Division of PIRSA may put the brakes on the progression of mining projects,” Mr Kuchel said.

“Delays in assessments and approvals will hold up important projects, delaying the economic recovery we are hoping the mining sector can deliver.



“Such downsizing comes precisely at the wrong time,” he added.

On a positive note, SACOME applauded the investment for renewable energies announced in the budget, which contains \$20 million over two years for the Renewable Energy Fund to support research, development and commercialisation of renewable energy technologies.

“South Australia has great potential for geothermal and other renewable energy sources,” Mr Kuchel said.

“Investment in these technologies now will bring multiple rewards later, and help maintain SA’s position as a leader in renewable energy.”

Another \$5 million is to go towards a materials and minerals science learning and research hub at UniSA’s Mawson Lakes campus.

“By supporting research and training, SA is recognising the long term value of research and development to further unlock our mineral potential,” Mr Kuchel said.

Further information:

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